

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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R 281415Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7985

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELTN, ETRD, MZ, ZA, MI

SUBJ: VISIT TO PORT NACALA; COMMENTS ON BEIRA

REF: BLANTYRE 607; LOURENCO MARQUES 407

1. AFTER MALAWI MEMBER NACALA PORT COMMITTEE ASSURED THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM RE ENTRY, EMBASSY OFFICER KOELEMAY ACCOMPANIED GROUP ON TRIP MADE MAY 22 AND 23 BY CHARTER PLANE. PLANE LANDED NAMPULA FOR IMMIGRATION CLEARANCE WHICH TOOD TWO HOURS DUE ABSENCE IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL WHICH ELICITED PORTUGUESE CIVAIR REP REMARK "INDEPENDENCE NOT WORK". AIR MALAWI PILOT FORCED TO GET SPECIAL FRELIMO CLEARANCE FOR CONTINUATION TO NACALA WHHICH HE SAID RESULT OF COOL BILATERAL RELATIONS. NO FURTHER CHECKS OF PLANE, PILOT, OR PASSENGERS IN NACALA.

2. NACAAL IS INDEED FINE NATURAL HARBOR, EASILY CAPABLE OF TRIPLING CAPACITY. KOELEMAY WAS ABLE TO VISIT PORT AREA, IN COMPANY OTHERS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY AFTER PERFUNCTORY QUESTIONING BY FRELIMO GUARDS. PORTUGUESE PORT INSPECTOR SAYS 4-6 SHIPS CAN NORMALLY BERTH AT ONE TIME DEPENDING ON TYPE OF CARGO AND SELF-OFFLOADING CAPABILITIES. NEW WAREHOUSE FACILITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION BUT INSPECTOR DOUBTFUL OF ANY MAJOR PORT IMPROVEMENTS

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IN FORSEEABLE FUTURE DUE TO QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS SURROUNDING

INDEPENDENCE.

3. EFFORTS TO CLEAR BACKLOG DESCRIBED AS "SUCCESSFUL" LAST FEW MONTHS BUT QUAYS AND WAREHOUSES REMAIN FULL. BEIRA BACKLOG (SOURCE ESTIMATES 6600 TONS FOR MALAWI AND 50,000 TONS; 12 SULPHUR, 11 TIMBER, 10 FERTILIZER; 1200 VEHICLES FOR ZAMBIA) AND SURCHARGE HAS CONTINUED TO PUSH TONNAGES INTO NACALA BACKLOG FOR ZAMBIA AT NACALA, HOWEVER, NOT SUBSTANTIAL, CONSISTING MAINLY 20 LARGE TRACTOR-TRAILERS AND 6 TONS TIMBER STILL AWAITING RAIL TRANSPORT. SOME 10,000 TONS ZAMBIAN COPPER INGOTS ON QUASIDE AWAITING SHIPMENT. TOTAL NACALA TONNAGE MOVED CONTINUES AT 70,000 TONS A MONTH, ENOUGH TO KEEP BACKLOG FROM GROWING AT MOMENT. BUT INSPECTOR, OTHER SOURCES INDICATE LIASON AND COOPERATION AMONG RAILWAYS (MALAWI AND C.F.M.), FORWARDING AGENTS, EXPORTERS POOR. NEAR COMPLETE BREAKDOWN IN TELEPHONE AND POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM MALAWI/ZAMBIA TO NACALA HAVE FURTHER COMPLICATED PICTURE IN LAST MONTH. TWO FULL WEEKS WORK EXPECTED TO BE LOST DUE TO INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS AND NO SHIPS YET SCHEDULED TO CALL IN JULY. DOCK WORK ALREADY VIRTUALLY CEASES AFTER NOON AND PRODUCTIVITY DESCRIBED AS LOW.

4. SOVIET SHIP WAS PRESENT, OFFLOADING WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BUT REMAINED AT ANCHOR IN MID-HARBOR AND WOULD NOT, AS IS REPORTEDLY CUSTOM WITH ALL SOVIET VESSELS AT THIS PORT, OFFICIALLY BERTH OR REGISTER. MOZAMBIQUE SHIP ALSO OFFLOADING EQUIPMENT FROM TANZANIAN FRELIMO BASES WHILE PORTUGUESE SHIP LOADING PORTUGUESE ARMY EQUIPMENT FOR SHIPMENT OUT.

5. PORTUGUESE ARMY STILL MUCH IN EVIDENCE IN TOWN DRESSED IN RAG TAG UNIFORMS (INCLUDING PLATFORM SHOES IN ONE CASE). MOST ARE FROM AERODROME BASE NO. 5 JUST OUTSIDE NACALA. ROWS OF PORTUGUESE HOMES STAND ABANDONED AND ARE CHEAPLY SOLD, BUT ATMOSPHERE RELAXED, CONVERSATION EASY, FRELIMO IN EVIDENCE ONLY IN IMMEDIATE PORT AREA. FOUR 8-10 STORY OFFICE AND APARTMENT BUILDINGS NEARING COMPLETION. TOWN CENTER NEW AND MODERN REFLECTING GROWTH OF COMMERCE THROUGH PORT DURING LAST FEW YEARS. THIS ACTIVITY ALMOST ENTIRELY DUE TO TRAFFIC TO AND FROM MALAWI OR THROUGH MALAWI TO ZAMBIA.
STEVENSON

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